



Exchange of Experiences for the Future: Japanese and Turkish Humanitarian Aid and Support Activities in Conflict Zones

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REFUGEE PROBLEM: IS IT A THREAT ON TURKEY'S NATIONAL SECURITY?

Haluk KARADAĞ*

There have been more than 300,000 newly born babies of Syrian refugees and 3.5 million Syrian population have been living in Turkey today¹. This amazing numbers alone underlines the significant importance and future complications of the refugee problem for Turkey. With its 80 million population, including its government, agencies and people, she is trying to help those people who are suffering since 2011. During period of civil war in Syria, Turkey spent 30 billion US dollars to the people who need immediate humanitarian aid². Today some of the refugees are living in 26 refugee camps and others are living in all 81 cities of Turkey³. The educational status of these people is also poor. 33% of the refugees had never gone to a school and 13% of them had learned Arabic with their own efforts⁴. So, illiteracy is common among this community. However these statistics are reflecting only Syrian side of the story. Other than that, refugees from countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, Libya, and Bangladesh are staying and start living in Turkey (Figure-1). To explain briefly, no countries accepted such amount of refugees in the near history.

These entire phenomenon expressed above have been made overall situation more complicated for Turkey. Besides the economic, socio-cultural,

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¹ Bülent Sarioğlu, "More than 300,000 'stateless' Syrian Babies Born in Turkey: Refugee Subcommittee", Hurriyet Daily News (2018), Retrieved from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/more-than-300-000-stateless-syrian-babies-born-in-turkey-refugee-subcommittee-128494>

² Yeniçağ newspaper, "Erdoğan: Suriyelilere 30 milyar dolar harcadık". (Erişim) <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/erdogan-suriyelilere-30-milyar-dolar-harcadik-167796h.htm>

³ UNHCR, Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan of Turkey: 2017-2018, p.62. Retrieved from <https://data2.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/53539>

⁴ Milliyet newspaper, "Türkiye'de 230 bin 'vatansız' bebek doğdu". (Erişim) <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-de-230-bin-vatansiz--gundem-2374476/>

and educational problems, security is emerging as another important factor for the host country. But there are also some precipitating causes for the security concerns. We analyze here in this paper these causes under several subcategories to understand the security issue. First focus will be on combatants which are known as ‘fighters’, who fought in a –terrorist-organization before. The term ‘fighter’ defines a person who still have tendency to violence and it is easy for him to commit a crime again. He also sees no reason to be a member of any criminal organization, such a kind of ‘mafia’. Second focus will be on smuggling and human trafficking. Third focus will be on male/female prostitution.

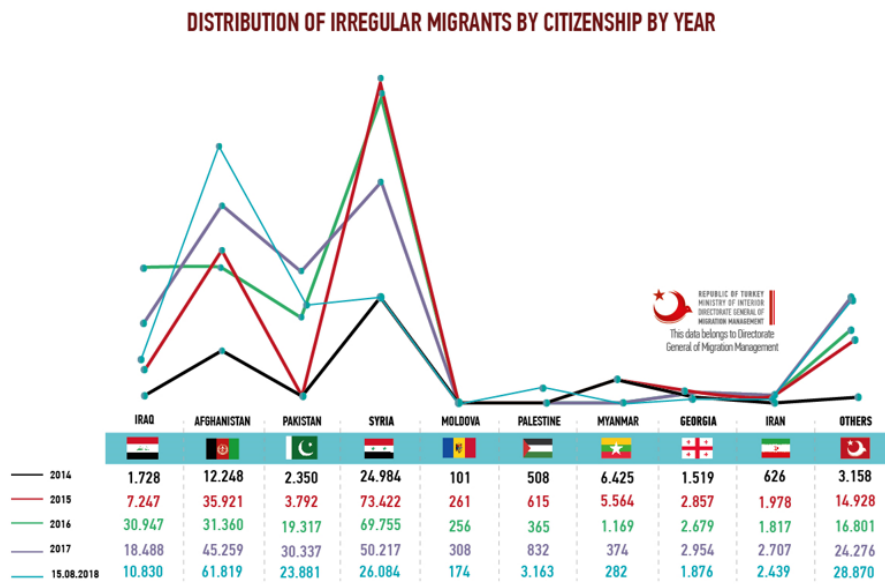


Figure-2 Distribution of Irregular Migrants by Citizenship by Year

Trend of Violence

There are two kinds of jihadists we will consider here in this study. The ones which still have connections with former organizational bodies and others have no connections with these organizational structures. While pressure increased on radical Islamist militants in Syria and Iraq they tend to cut loose from the organizations which they were part of. So, militants are seeking to find a way to change their positions and hide their identities. Neighboring countries seem best place to hide in and perfect destination to

start a new life. Although changing their names and life stories, they may still have connections with previous organizational bodies⁵. This is the main characteristic makes these people dangerous and puts them under 'risky' category.

We categorize second group which has no connection with former organizational bodies. Tremendous number of illiterate, untrained and unskilled people starts facing with other kinds of problems when they pass thorough other country. Maslow's hierarchy of needs give a satisfactory information to understand the psychology of these groups. After crossing the borders of host country, the *safety needs* step is met by the authorities but the other steps also need to be satisfied. A failure in satisfaction –which are rarely successful- triggers people to find an illegal way for survival. In the Syria case due to the civil war most of the people sent their families to the safer neighboring countries, mostly Turkey, and joined to an armed group to fight. After certain years some tired of fighting, quit the –terrorist-organization and going back to join their families⁶. However, it is difficult to accommodate themselves to the situation in the new place and primary challenge here is to find an appropriate job for a suitable wage. Owing to the fact that new country, new rules and new social norms might turn out the optimistic expectations into painful facts in the new life of the displaced family. Post traumatic disorder may change their attitudes and incites them easily to commit a crime. So, conditions before he or she had lived may cause jihadists to exhibit criminal behavior depending on past vicious experiences.

Smuggling and Human Trafficking

Smuggling and human trafficking is another serious concern for Turkey. These type of immigration, irregular migration, increases the number of immigrants without any governmental control in the country. (Figure-2) The billion-dollar business makes smuggling and human trafficking popular among some of those people in the region. Despite the difficulty of taking full control of borderline of 911 kilometers, Turkey has constructed a 764 km concrete security wall with other alternative security measures such as patrol routes, manned and unmanned towers, thermal cameras, and remote-controlled weaponry systems to prevent or at least

⁵ T24 News, Güvenlik Uzmanlarından IŞİD uyarısı: Yaklaşık 900 cihatçı Türkiye'ye döndü; tehlike geçmiş değil. <http://t24.com.tr/haber/guvenlik-uzmanlarindan-isis-uyarisi-yaklasik-900-cihatci-turkiyeye-dondu-tehlike-gecmis-degil,477590>

⁶ BBC Turkish, Guardian: Eski IŞİD militanları sınırdan Türkiye'ye geçiyor. <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-41249672>

minimize the number of illegal smuggling and human trafficking⁷. However there still will be attempts to penetrate the border in the future. Drug and cigarette trafficking are the ones mostly threatening Turkey in this business. 3,160 people arrested from drug trafficking trade in Turkey in 2017. These numbers are the indicators of deteriorating situation of struggle with the public health and financial security concerns.

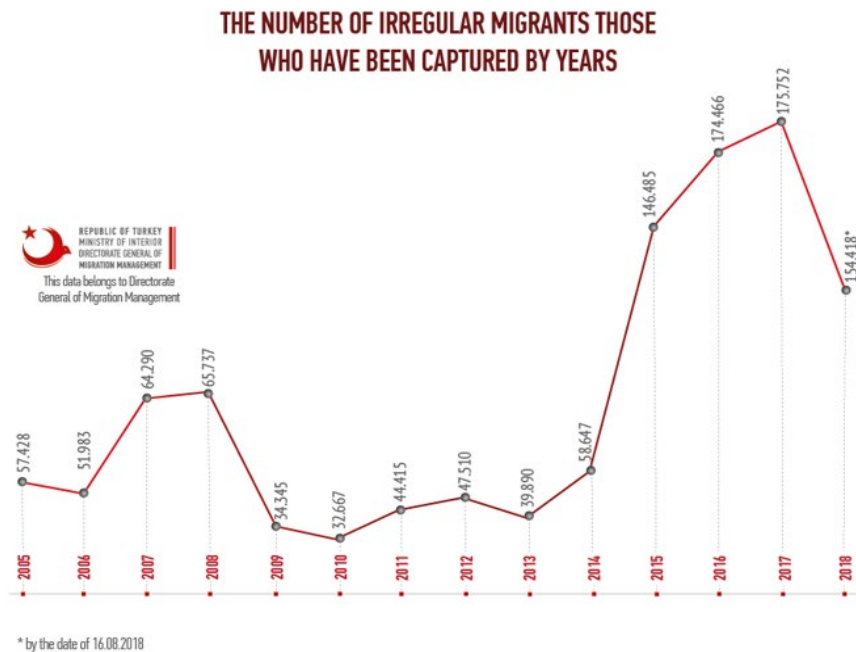


Figure-2 The Number of Irregular Migrants Between 2005-2018⁸

Human trafficking is also old issue in today's world. There are myriads of examples to human trafficking especially in some African and Asian countries. Townsend and Mili explained tragedy of human trafficking in their article with examples from Afghanistan and Pakistan as shown below:

Robbery, petty crime and trafficking in various goods are common means of subsistence for terrorist cells. 'The muja-

⁷ Daily Sabah, "Turkey Finishes Construction of 764-km Security Wall on Syria Border", <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/06/09/turkey-finishes-construction-of-764-km-security-wall-on-syria-border>

⁸ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, Irregular Migration, (Retrieved from) http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/irregular-migration_915_1024_4746_icerik

hidden in *Tajikistan* routinely kidnap children and release them after extorting ransom, steal people's belongings, including their livestock'...Lieutenant General Safdar Hussain, who leads Pakistan's hunt for al-Qa`ida militants in northwestern Pakistan, explained in his speech 'boys whose average age is 16 or 17 years, and it is my assessment that most of them have either been kidnapped or they were sold...and after bringing them here, these [boys] are used for terrorism'. Whether smuggled or trafficked, most youths are reported to come from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan.⁹

Smuggling is at the heart of criminal enterprises¹⁰. So, it needs to be tightly controlled by the authorities.

Male/Female Prostitution

Recently there appeared male or female prostitutions' stories in some European media. Refugees fleeing to other countries especially EU countries with the hope of finding a better life. However they are facing with realities and starting to earn money by resorting to illegal ways. These unfortunate people spend most of their funding to the human smugglers and start to live below the host countries poverty line. Then there left no money to spend for living. Most of these people have also no work to do and earn a living. So, all scenario can be explained as desperate attempt to survive. In Turkey, it is really difficult to find clues on illegal prostitution issue but in some European countries we can openly see some cases. For example according to the independent survey made by DPA in Germany there are young refugees (especially males) between the ages of 20 to 25 from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Syria earning money thorough prostitution. In Frankfurt, AIDS Assistance group claims actual numbers are high among refugees who serves as prostitutes¹¹. These cases show us that desperation among refugees could be source of social breakdown in the community and nurture the illegal ways of making money.

⁹ Jacob Townsend and Hayder Mili, "Human Smuggling and Trafficking: An International Terrorist Security Risk?", CTC Centinel Journal, (May 2008), Vol.1, Issue 6.

¹⁰ Andrew Wong, "A Multibillion-dollar Criminal Network is Being Fuelled by Inadequate Refugee Policies", CNBC News, (Retrieved from) <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/27/refugee-crisis-fuelling-criminal-network-and-human-trafficking.html>

¹¹ Anna Kristina Bückmann and Ira Schaible, 'It's about survival': Why young male refugees are turning to prostitution. The Local de. (Retrieved from) <https://www.thelocal.de/20170522/its-about-survival-why-young-male-refugees-are-turning-to-prostitution>

Conclusion

Sample cases explained above reveal the security concerns which Turkey could be facing off in the near future. It is not only because Turkey has borderline with problematic (weak) states. Refugees also come from distant countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Congo. Our focus, here in this paper, specifically point out the dangers which originated from immigration. We sort out the perils of immigration for host country under three categories; violence/terrorism, smuggling/human trafficking and male/female prostitution. Three of these concerns have potential to affect economic, human, personnel and community security in the country. Turkey, with 26 refugee camps scattered all around, and near 85 percent of immigrants are living outside of these camps –most of them are living under lower standards of life with very low wages- would be facing off problematic situation in the near future. In addition to that it seems a serious problem to integrate some refugee communities into the Turkish culture, language and daily life. In conclusion refugee problem is a problem of mankind not only neighboring countries, effects every other nation in the world, and comprehensive solution has belonged to be humanity.

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